PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING

Family & Children's Services 1991/1992 Program Plan

Ministry of Social Services and Housing
March 1991

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92-06546/

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INTRODUCTION

- The family and children's services plan provides a framework for outlining past, current and planned activities. The plan enables us to describe our services, within the broader context of overall Ministry programs, and the external environment in which these services are provided.

- The plan promotes a common vision of the direction of family and children's services in British Columbia in the 1990's, and provides the basis for consultation and feedback from community groups and other key stakeholders. Above all, the plan is a guide for Ministry staff to translate family and children's services strategic priorities into achievable results.

- The family and children's services plan forms an integral component of the Ministry's business plan. It shows how we propose to action the Ministry's overall vision, values and goals in the provision of services to children and their families.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Program Plan

This document builds on strategic priorities outlined in last year's plan. In the implementation of that plan, we have achieved many of our commitments.

- For example, we have established the assisted adoption program; introduced legislation to regulate private adoptions and to provide information to parents in Family and Child Service Act hearings; drafted social work practice standards; developed new culturally appropriate services to Native people; developed regional blueprints for child care resources; and provided increased funding for contracts with community partners.

- We have also been proactive in recommending new approaches to providing services to children and their families, in response to internal review processes, and to the Ombudsman's Report on Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families.

- These recommendations are included in the family and children's services strategic priorities established for the 1991 - 1992 fiscal year.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

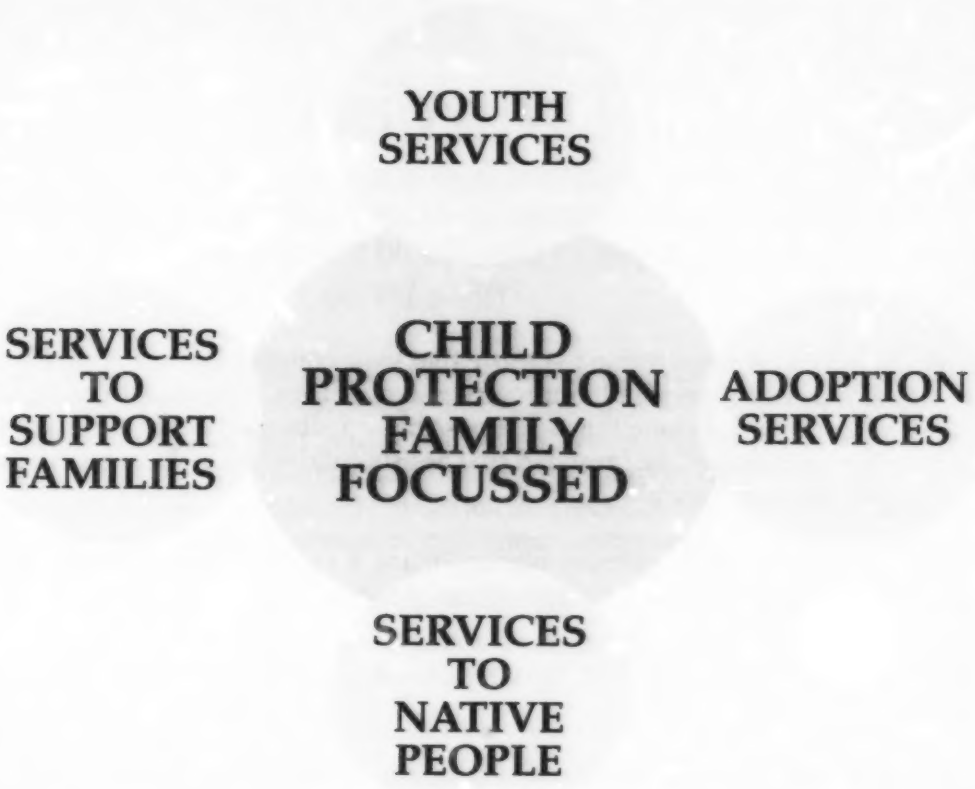
Vision

The following vision statement describes our primary mandated responsibility - Child Protection With a Family Focus:

- Families are responsible to ensure that their children are safe from abuse and neglect. If required, our intervention will assist families to fulfill this responsibility. Where this is not possible, an alternative safe and stable environment will be provided that assists children to achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

- In addition to this primary responsibility, we offer a range of services that have a broader family and community focus.

The following graphic describes the relationship between these services and our core activity:



FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Services to Support Families

The family, extended family and community are responsible to ensure their children are free from abuse and neglect, and provide them with a healthy and supportive environment. Ministry services will assist families to meet this responsibility.

Services to Youth

Youth will take responsibility for and be involved in planning their transition to independence. Ministry services will support youth and their families in making this transition.

Native Child Welfare

Native people, through their Bands, Tribal Councils, organizations or from the community, will be involved in the development and be responsible for delivery of services to their children and families. Ministry services will reflect and respect the unique culture and heritage of Native people.

Adoption Services

Children who cannot live with their own parents or extended family will have the benefit of a permanent home through adoption. In planning the adoption, the child's culture and heritage will be respected. From pre-placement planning to the post adoption stage, Ministry services will ensure the long term security of the adoption placement.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Values

In the pursuit of our vision for all services for families and children, we adhere to the following core values:

- **Ensuring the Safety and Well-Being of the Child**
  The safety and well-being of the child shall be the paramount consideration in the provision of services to children.

- **Strengthening the Family**
  The preferred environment for providing for the child's safety and well-being is with his or her own family, or extended family, and in the child's own community.

- **Selecting the Most Appropriate Intervention**
  We believe that care must be taken in the determination of the kind of intervention used with the family, balancing the long-term impact of the intervention with the immediate concern for the child's safety.

- **Respecting Individual Rights**
  We ensure the right of the child, family and caregivers to be heard, informed and involved in decision making in matters affecting them. We respect the privacy of personal information.

- **Providing Quality Service**
  Quality service is derived from constant improvement. It is based upon our staff and partners providing timely and goal specific services. Our leadership is required to integrate the delivery of quality services.

- **Involving the Community**
  We will involve individuals and groups in the planning and development of child, youth and family services that meet the unique needs of their community.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Strategic Priorities

The following is a summary of the major family and children's services strategic priorities for the 1991 - 1992 fiscal year:

- **Planning and Development of Integrated Services to Children and Youth**
  We will work with other Ministries and the community to implement joint government initiatives arising from internal review processes and from the Ombudsman's Report on Public Services to Children, Youth and Their Families. We will ensure that inter-ministry protocols are effective and reflect current need.

- **Legislative Review**
  We will review the current legislation administered by this Ministry, in particular the Family and Child Service Act, and recommend changes that will more effectively address issues such as the role and responsibility of the family, service to youth and Native child welfare.

- **Partnerships for a More Effective Service System**
  We will continue to build and strengthen our partnerships with community groups and major stakeholders. Initiatives will include the establishment of licensed agencies to provide services in non-ministry adoptions. We will also work with foster parents to develop new models of family care.

- **Quality of Service**
  We will implement standards for social work practice and residential care; implement new contracting policy, and continue to develop effective outcome measurements.

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Initiatives

The current work plan must ensure that activities are integrated both within the Ministry and with related activity external to the Ministry. The workplan must also realistically reflect resources available throughout the Ministry to successfully accomplish assigned tasks.

Current and Projected Activities:

- **Integrated Services to Children and Youth**
  - establish the Child and Youth Secretariat
  - strengthen local and regional child and youth committees
  - participate in developing inter-ministry Native social policy framework
  - review and update existing protocols
  - establish a program for children in care who become 19 years of age, to assist them in furthering their career goals
  - develop new service models focussed on parent-teen conflict
  - review and strengthen continuum of services for adopting families.

- **Partnerships**
  - establish licensed adoption agencies
  - develop protocol agreements with Native groups
  - work with foster parents on various models of family care.

- **Service Quality**
  - implement new contracting policy
  - develop and pilot outcome measurements
  - implement the updated practice standards for social workers
  - implement the revised social worker training module
  - develop a Native child welfare training module for Band and Ministry workers.

- **Review of Legislation**
  - design a Legislation Review Plan
  - pursue public consultation as directed
  - introduce new legislation as directed.